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Mother Poems for Mothers' Day

By MRS. JACK BURTON

MOTHER POEMS

for

MOTHERS' DAY

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By Mrs. Jack Burton, mrs Clara Ellen (Cook)

Mother

"Oh, there never could be such another
Dear little lady—she was my mother."

TO HER

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Foreword

In ancient days the spirit and virtues of the people were voiced in ballad and folk song by an inspired minstrelsy. The mantle of this honorable guild has fallen, in these modern days, on the few gifted writers who can, in quaint and pointed verse, interpret the heart throbs of the common people, whom, Abraham Lincoln said, God loves best because he made so many of them. The gift of interpretation, a divine one, endows one modest Nebraska writer of verse, whose offering is contained in this beautiful book, dedicated to the Mothers of the land, and placed on sale on the day devoted to their enshrinement, in popular reverence. There are vagrant poems which stir the heart and the imagination, voicing all our yearnings, and all of our emotions and the things of love that are inspired by Mother. There are other poems that breathe of courage, and inspiration, and the nobler things of life—as a lamp set at our feet to guide our way. The heart and mind labor involved in the birth of these poems is a labor of love in the largest sense—and being born of quiet genius will become a part of the warp and woof of the fabric of the folk songs which show the true greatness of a people.

JOHN H. KEARNES.

When Garden Flowers Bloom

I ALWAYS think of mother
When garden flowers bloom
And smile at one another,
And shed their sweet perfume.

It seems her hand has touched them,
No matter where they grow,
It seems her eyes have watched them,
As in the long ago.

It seems her lips have kissed them,
And on their beauty smiled,
It seems she has caressed them,
The flowers undefiled.

The balsam and verbenia
In colors bright and gay,
The hollyhock and zinnia,
All in their glad array;

Seem gathered there together,
Her praise aloud to sing
Until they droop and wither—
Their lives an offering—

The lily of the valley,
The gladioli, too,
The faintly scented dahlia,
The larkspur pink and blue,

Seem silently assembled
In rows precise and quaint,
To marvel at her goodness;
Sweet mother, gentle saint.

And so I think of mother,
When garden flowers grow
And smile at one another,
Because she loved them so.

She Was My Mother

DEAR LITTLE lady in lavender dress,
Spirit of smiling loveliness;
Snow-white hair, her well-earned crown,
White where once was golden brown,
Deep blue eyes, whose glances told
Of tender love that ne'er grows old.
Soft smooth cheeks, with a rose tint brushed,
Sweet kind lips — that have long been hushed —
Oh, there never could be such another
Dear little lady — she was my mother.

Dear little lady in lavender gowned,
Hers a dignity most profound,
Hers a gentle and kindly mien,
Hers the poise of a gracious queen,
Hers a touch that soothed the pain,
Lifting the bowed head up again,
Hers an arm that could reach and bring
Storm tossed ones to the fold again.
Oh, there never could be such another
Dear little lady — she was my mother.

Dear little lady, I see her tonight,
Emblem of all that's good and right,
Worthy example of what should be,
Angel of love and purity,
Kind and gentle, yet firm and strong;
She made of discord the sweetest song.
Into a day made dark with woe
She brought the sun, tho' the clouds hung low.
Oh, there never could be such another
Dear little lady — she was my mother.

It's Springtime in Nebraska

IT'S SPRINGTIME in Nebraska,
The woods are smelling sweet,
Like wondrous velvet carpets
Are the fields of growing wheat,
The cherry buds are bursting
And there's sunshine everywhere;
It's springtime in Nebraska—
And you're not here.

It's springtime in Nebraska,
The birds are nesting now,
The little creeks and rivers
Are rippling as they flow.
The music of the songsters
Denotes their joyous cheer;
It's springtime in Nebraska—
And you're not here.

It's springtime in Nebraska,
And dandelions bold
Bespeck the lawn and wayside
With bloom of yellow gold.
The scent of leaf and flower
Makes sweet the atmosphere;
It's springtime in Nebraska—
And you're not here.

It's springtime in Nebraska,
The prairie grasses nod,
And daisies spring in silence
From out the weedy sod,
And meadow lark's sweet warble
Like bugle note calls clear;
It's springtime in Nebraska—
And you're not here.

Mother Patching

OTHER sits beside the window
Fixing up the children's clothes,
Mending overalls and dresses,
Darning holes in stocking toes,
Pressing here a little wrinkle,
Patching there a little tear,
Sewing up each rended garment
For the boy and girl to wear.

Mother knows that they are near her,
Knows that every care or pain
She can soothe in just a moment,
Making smiles come back again.
So she does not heed the patter
Of their feet upon the floor,
Does not hear their childish clatter,
For she thinks of something more.

She is thinking, as she patches,
Of the dreaded future day
When the boy she loves and watches
Will be gone from her away;
When the girl she guards and blesses
Will have met the stress of life,
Far from mother's fond caresses,
In the world's unfeeling strife.

So with every little button
That she fastens on the clothes,
There's a thought most sad and tender,
And a little prayer that goes
To the God of good, who's near her,
To the king of love and joy,
Asking that He guide and cheer her
As she rears her girl and boy.

Little Old Lady in a Railway Station

LITTLE old lady in bonnet and shawl,
Scared at the noise and the jostle and all;
Don't look so anxious, for they'll let you know,
They'll call your train when the time comes to go.

They'll help you on with your bundles and grips,
Bird cage and bandbox and basket of slips,
They'll help you find a good comfortable seat;
Little old lady so timid and sweet.

Little old lady, don't worry and fret
Over the things you fear you'll forget,
Hold to your purse and your handkerchief white,
Don't lose your ticket and you'll be alright.

Little old lady your train will soon come
And take you to son's or to dear daughter's home;
There you'll be met with a joyous ado,
There they are anxiously waiting for you.

Little old lady, your hands folded there
Speak of long service for those you hold dear,
Speak of a life full of labor and love
Spurred by a worship that comes from above.

Little old lady, your eyes dimmed with age
Seem to look searchingly over life's page,
Seem to look back to the long, long ago,
To those you have chided, yet comforted too.

Little old lady, your lips drawn and thin
Speak of long hours of anguish and pain,
Speak of sweet smiles in a youth's golden time,
Speak of love's sacrifice, sweetly sublime.

Little old lady, your train's coming fast;
Soon you'll be borne to that heavenly rest,
Soon you'll clasp hands with the ones you loved so,
For they are anxiously waiting for you.

Mother I've Missed You

MOTHER I've missed you so since you've been gone,
My soul has yearned for those dear smiles of thine,
I've listened for the echo of your song
To soothe my heart ache with its notes sublime.

My arms have ached to feel your kind embrace,
Thro' silent hours of night I've sobbed for thee,
I've hungered for the sight of your sweet face,
And mourned that you may not come back to me.

Mother, I've missed the pressure of your hand,
I've longed to whisper low into your ear
The words that only you could understand;
I've missed you, oh I've missed you mother dear.

And yet, I would not call you back again;
Back where cold winds could chill your velvet cheek,
Back where life's cruel storms of wind and rain
Against your tender heart, my dear, could beat.

I would not call you back again, my dear,
Lest a stray cloud should cross your path—but oh,
Life is so empty, and so void of cheer
Since you are gone—Mother I miss you so.

The Mother and the Rose

SAID THE rose to the mother pure and good:
"Why do you come here every day?
Why do you watch with tenderest care
My petals turn to the sun's bright ray?
Why do you press a fervent kiss
On my very heart, oh lady fair?
Why do you weep? Pray tell me this,
Why do you stand in silence here?
Why do you clasp those hands and sigh?
They are as white as the lily there —
Why on your cheek a tear, oh why?
Have you more grief than heart can bear?"

Said the lady fair to the rose so red,
"Oft' in the golden past, sweet flower,
My babe and I to this garden fled
From earthly scenes, for a heavenly hour.
One day he pressed a baby kiss
On a tender rose bud, young and pink,
And looking up in childish bliss
Said softly, 'I'll pick dis, I fink.'
Then I made answer: 'Wait, my child,
Wait 'till the dainty leaves unfold,
And when their beauty on us smiles
The flower is yours, to have and hold.'"

"As the rose bud grew and its fragrance shed
Throughout the garden old and grand.
I came each day with the little lad,
My whole life held in his tiny hand.
We watched together every day;
'It is my rose,' he said in glee,
'You are my flower,' I answered back,
And drew him closer then to me.
But long before his rose burst forth
My little flower had bloomed in heaven;
Angels had taken him from earth
And his sweet rose to me had given."

It Was You

A BEAUTIFUL mother once held in her arms
A delicate baby so tender and sweet;
The song that she sung, blessed with lullaby's charms,
Enraptured her soul with a joy all complete.

Fond dreams filled her soul as she looked at the child,
The prayer that went up was an infinite plea
That God in his love and compassion so mild
Would make of her babe what he willed it to be.

That mother so fair was your mother, my boy,
The baby she held in her dear arms was you,
Her life's inspiration, her comfort, her joy—
But tell me I pray, have her dreams come true?

That kind, patient mother, you cannot forget,
She loved you and watched you and cherished you so.
How often with tear drops her dear eyes were wet,
As she rocked a sick babe — and that baby was you.

That beautiful mother, to you she was given;
Those sweet words of love that she whispered so low
Merged into a dream that was sent her from heaven—
But tell me my boy, has the dream come true?

Mother

THERE'S a word known as faith and one as love,
And hope is a word oft' repeated,
They all bring a tho't of the things above;
As we hear them our hearts are elated.

But there is a word that embodies them all,
Faith, love, and sweet hope put together,
The world and her sages it seems to enthrall;
It's the sacred, the wonderword "Mother".

The Picture

THERE'S a picture, ahangin' in our front room,
Of two old graves with their head stones bare,
An' just behind, like a church yard's tomb,
Stands an empty cottage — they once lived there—

An' under the picture there's writ, I mind,
'Bout the young folks all to the city goin',
An' the old folks bein' left behind
In the two graves there in the yard alone.

I can see the roses aclimbin' 'round,
An' 'most forget that the dead lie there,
For they nearly cover each little mound,
With their undergrowth and their foliage rare.

Sometimes I sit there by the hour
An' count the swallows aflyin' round,
An' 'most reach out to cull a flower
Agrowin' there on the pictured ground.

Oh, it looks so quiet an' restful there,
An' I'm so tired all the time
That I almost wish I was lyin' there
'Neath the undergrowth and the columbine.

But land, when the girls come runnin' in
I most forget I was ever sad;
An' the boys from the cornfield back again
Make the whole house ring with their songs so glad.

An' when our boy Tim, like his pa, you know,
Puts his arm around me an' just says, "marm,"
It makes me 'shamed I was ever blue,
Or tired o' life on the litle farm.

An' next time I look at the picture there,
Ahangin' yonder in our front room,
I scarcely glance at the headstones bare,
Or see the graves in their silent gloom.

Instead, I look at the cottage gray,
An' seem to think I have gone inside;
I hear the voices of children gay,
The father's joy and the mother's pride.

I see a fire in the hearthstone glow,
I hear sweet songs in the little home,
An' I am glad I have learned to know
The picture hangin' in our front room.

Oh, Little Mother

OH, LITTLE mother, don't you know
That tho' you're often tired,
A great big world depends on you?
By you we're all inspired
To do the things that come our way,
To meet life's daily bothers,
And what we do and what we say
Lies largely with our mothers.

Why, don't you know that every day
As through your tasks you're going
A million prayers are said for you?
A million hearts are growing
More kindly for the love of you,
Better, for knowing 'bout you;
So little mother don't be blue,
We couldn't do without you.

Ma Fed 'Im

A TRAMP came up to our back door,
An' pa spoke to him before
Ma could get there, an' he said
"So you say you want some bread.
Seems to me that such as you
Could find somethin' more to do
Than jest beg, an' tramp around.
Lots o' good jobs to be found"—
An' pa said t' 'im.

"We've no time my lad, today,
Fer to entertain that way,
Ma an' I are gettin' old,
An' we ain't jest made o' gold,
An' if we give our bread away
We'll be tramps ourselves some day."
'N'en pa winked, an' said, "we're not
Feedin' tramps today"—that's what
Pa said t' 'im.

Ma jest wouldn't hear no more,
Rushed right over to the door
An' said, "oh shaw, it ain't no bother,
Listen dad, he's got a mother,
An' when I'm feedin' him it seems
I'm abringin' true her dreams
Of his future happiness.
We won't miss this grub, I guess"—
An' ma fed 'im.

After he had gone away
Ma kept thinkin' all that day,
'N'en she said, "he sure was dirty,
But some mother thought him purty
When he was a little kid
In his cradle, 'course she did;
Tramps have mothers, same as we"—
An' maybe that's the reason why
Ma fed 'im.

She said, "when folks ask bread o' you
There's just one thing, boys, to do,
Feed 'em — 't aint fer you to know
What has bro't 'em to their woe.
If they're hungry, that's enough,
Tho' they're poorly clad an' gruff,
It's fer you to lend a hand
An' help 'em boys — you understand"—
Yes, ma fed 'im.

If You Should Come

OTHER, if you should come to me tonight,
In the soft glow and shades of evening light,
Out of that mystic region of the blest,
All pale and beautiful, in white robe dressed.

I would not tell you of the tears,
Of the dull heart aches, of the empty years,
Of the soul-yearning since you went away;
Or the long nights that follow each dark day.

I would not tell you that the winds moan low
Thro' the black night, as if to call for you,
I would not tell you that the robin's song
Seems but a requiem since you are gone.

I'd only lay my head upon your breast—
As when a child I cuddled down to rest—
And into your dear hand my hand would creep,
And as my head fell lower I would weep.

The Empty House

THE HOUSE seems empty now since she is gone,
But flowers that were bro't her yesterday
Still lend their fragrance to the little room
In lingering with us another day.
There in the corner lay the books she read,
This is the easy chair she liked so well;
The gold fish and canary that she fed
Are here, but ah, the house is empty still.

This is the window where she sat so long
And prayed and waited for the spring to come,
That she once more might hear the robins' song—
An omen that the flowers soon would bloom—
And yonder stands the cot on which she lay,
Here is a dainty dress she once had on,
There is the harp on which she used to play,
But ah, the house is empty since she's gone.

And all around, it seems that I can hear
The echo of the songs she used to sing,
Her voice in sweet communion and in prayer,
As evening hovered earth with starry wing.
I almost hear her step upon the floor,
For she was with me only yesterday;
Mother, come back, my heart is sad and sore,
Yes, I am lonely since you went away.

Her Picture

ISN'T SHE wonderful? See the dear face
In the old-fashioned picture that hangs in its place.
Look at the lips, they are rounded and sweet,
With tint of the roses that brush her soft cheek.

Isn't she wonderful? Look at the hair
Pushed from her forehead with neatness and care,
Combed in the style of a princess or queen,
In its waving a glint of spun gold may be seen.

Is'nt she wonderful? White throat that seems
To swell as with song, while she peacefully dreams
There in the picture, her head proudly bent
As she gazes upon me with kindly intent.

Isn't she wonderful? Blue eyes that smile
Wistfully out from the frame on the wall;
Almost I hear her in whispers that ring
Of youth passed away to come never again.

Oh, what a picture! How wondrous to know
The beauty of mother's face long, long ago.
What a rich heritage mine, to enjoy
Her presence altho' she has long been away.

Perhaps, Oh Flowers

OH FLOWERS, blooming in the garden there,
With permeating sweetness rich and rare,
How can you bloom when her dear lips are still?
How can your brightness all the garden fill?

How can you flaunt your gaudy rainment forth
And throw sweet kisses to a wondering earth?
How can you beam, and proudly over all
Smile, when she sleeps and answers not your call?

Ah rose, whose petals soft are but a part
Of the sweet beauty bursting from your heart,
Do you not feel a tinge of bitter pain
When you are told that she'll not come again?

And you, ah tender, perfect rosemary,
Scattering perfume all along the way;
Have you not heard that on a summer night
She joined an angel band and took her flight?

Sweet lily, you are white and pure like snow.
Have you not felt her tender love for you?
How can you then, in peace, bloom calmly on
Here in the garden, when you know she's gone?

Ah, flowers, that she's tended with such care,
'Twere best I judge you not than be unfair;
Perhaps your flower-eyes more clearly see
Than mortal eyes, that have been giv'n to me.

Perhaps what seems to me your unconcern
Is just the way of flowers when they mourn;
Or maybe when you lift your heads so high,
You see her angel spirit in the sky.

And when you fling your gorgeous colors on,
Who knows but what 'tis then she comes along
And, with a golden scepter in her hand,
Fondles you, flowers, perhaps you understand.

And maybe the soft petal's crimson blush
Is caus'ed by an unaccustomed hush
That settles o'er the garden when she stoops
To kiss some lovelorn blossom e'er it droops.

Yes, maybe her sweet spirit all serene,
Comes to the garden, just by flowers seen,
And in the breeze that makes you dance and play
You feel the breath that bore her soul away.

Your Lullabies

OH MOTHER, when you sang those lullabies
So softly in the nursery long ago,
Did you not feel that angels in the skies
Were list'ning to the accents sweet and low?

And mother, when you hushed the baby's cries
In the still night, with hymns of sweet content,
Oh mother darling, could you realize
How far the echoes of your music went?

Adown the ages they have travelled far,
Those notes that trembled on your weary lips;
Echoing thro' the centuries they are,
Calming lost mariners in their sinking ships,

Soothing the soldier as he bleeds and dies,
Ringing once more in his dull memory,
Sounding above the shrapnel as it flies;
Louder your croon than war's artillery.

They tell me that in heaven's choir above,
The sweetest anthems that the angels sing
Are tones snatched from your lullabies of love
And heralded as music for the King.

Because of Her

BECAUSE she smiled, the world was brighter far
Than heaven lit by shining sun or star;
The earth took on a vastly different mien,
And life was sweeter than it yet had been.

Because she spoke, a tender thought was stirred
Deep in the heart of every one that heard,
And music sweet seemed echoing o'er and o'er,
E'en when her voice was heard on earth no more.

Because she lived, the earth was richly blest,
Hearts sad and tired were lullabied to rest,
Beauty was seen in smallest bud and flower,
And the whole world seemed glad because of her.

Because she died, there sprung a hope eternal
In the poor lives once lifted by her hand,
And visions came of angel bands supernal
Guided by her on heaven's golden strand.

Miscellaneous Poems

It Is God

A TINY star in the evening light,
A wild bird making its homeward flight,
A firefly darting through the trees,
A scent of flowers, a gentle breeze,
And woodland paths by children trod;
But back of all is God, is God.

A strength to wipe away the tears,
A hope that banishes all fears,
A faith to lift life's broken chain
And weave the strands all back again,
Meekness to bow and kiss the rod;
But back of all is God, is God.

The sweet content of nestlings wild,
A mother's worship of her child.
A humble cot where love abides,
And joy and gladness sweet betides.
Do you ever think, as through life you plod,
That back of all is God, is God?

New Year Resolutions

I'M GOING to laugh and smile today,
For blessings that have come my way
The past year.
And I am going to try and see
That other folks are glad and gay
And full of cheer.

I'm going to try and bring a smile
To someone sorrowing the while
I laugh.
I'll try and make their poor hearts feel
That sighs and longings are not real;
Are only chaff.

I'll try each day to make them see
The beauty all along their way,
And then—
I may forget my own dark hours,
May gain a strength from unseen powers—
And hope again.

Night on the Prairie

WHEN the stars come out at night,
Air all cool and sky all white,
Moon agleaming up above,
Night owls crooning songs of love,
Breezes rustling o'er the plains,
Crickets chirping joyful strains,
Coyotes howling over there
In the canyon's stillness, where
Sandhills rise like towers of old,
With their wealth of yellow gold
Sand, that comes a'sifting down,
Borne by hot winds all around,
On the prairie.

When the sage bush dense and green,
That the night wind seems to preen,
Makes a million little tents
Rise like dark veiled monuments
Casting shadows on the ground
With a mournfulness profound—
They bespeak the days to come,
Days of loneliness and gloom—
And a dread, like winter's chill,
Comes the summer warmth to kill,
On the prairie.

Cactus lifting up its head
From a soft and grassy bed,
Stretching arms to heaven's blue,
Rev'ling in the liquid dew,
Insects in one chorus grand
Singing of the sun and sand,
Singing of the hot wind's breath,
Singing of a desert death;
Then, in chanting harmony,
Singing of their life so free,
Singing of the winds at play,
Singing of the night's array,

Of a starry canopy
Jeweled by the milky way;
Singing of the flowers asleep,
Of the turtle doves that weep
On the prairie.

Yonder on the broad plateau,
Yonder where the thistles grow,
Stands, what seems in night's strange thrill
Like a city cold and still—
In whose dark and dismal tower
Long since chimed the midnight hour—
Countless houses built of clay,
Like the Arab's tents are they.
'Neath the star draped firmament
They bespeak a race content
With their castles in the clay;
Here in simple harmony
Ground-dog, owl and serpent vile
Live and love and weep and smile,
On the prairie.

Oh, the stillness; oh, the peace,
Rapture of a soul's release,
As the soft winds seem to wake
And a full, deep breath to take—
Like a sleeping child disturbed,
Slumbers on, all unperturbed—
Night like this must mean for me
Part of my eternity,
Part of things I never knew,
Worlds that I must travel through
E'er I reach the one great goal,
E'er I anchor heart and soul
In the void of that beyond,
In that strange and unknown land
Where the soul is said to rest
'Mong the spirits of the blest.
Night like this can only be
Part of that eternity,
On the prairie.

A Song of Nebraska

I MAY not sing of mountains, that lift their snowy heads
To touch Nebraska's ever changing sky,
Or white and frothy sea foam tossed from ocean beds
Like wilted flowers idly thrown away.

But I can sing of sand hills that flank the prairie land—
Gold brown they are, and marked with sage bush green—
And I can sing of visions I've caught in mirage grand,
Reflected from a river's sparkling sheen.

I may not sing of castles far famed in history's lore,
With gardens planned long centuries ago,
But I can sing of bungalows and cottages galore
That sprung from sod built houses crude and low.

And I can sing of mallards and cadwells soaring high,
And sportsmen hunting in the flat lagoons,
The bob-o-link and cat bird, the rain crow's piercing cry,
And meadow larks that trill their prairie tunes.

And I can sing of wheat fields with shocks of bronzine hue,
Like beaded mantle, by some reaper flung
Across the golden stubble, to wait 'till thrasher crew
Unravels what the shocker's hand has done.

And I can sing of cornfields, that once were grassy plain,
Green stalks that send out hope with every blade;
Of golden tassels waving o'er miles of ripening grain,
And hay lands where the cycle's song is heard.

And I can sing of beauty in broad alfalfa fields,
Blue green made velvety by unseen powers;
Wonderful, dense the prospect, a harvest rich it yields,
And revels in the perfume of its flowers.

And I can sing of orchards that fringe the meadow lands,
And shade trees too, majestically tall,
The pine tree and box elder, the cottonwood that stands
Towering gloriously over all.

And I can sing of stubble fields, where black birds sally forth
In flocks so dense that as they hurry by
Their wings make strange, wild music, not born of heaven or
earth,
But muffled in a dirge-like melody.

I may not sing of poppys, like those on Flanders' fields,
Nor shamrock green, like that of Emerald Isle,
But I can sing of leafage, that in its folds conceals
Pale wild flowers fostered by an angel's smile.

And I can sing of bright flowers with wild rose blooming near,
Of goldenrod — Nebraska's very own,—
Of little wild verbenia, like grey eyes soft and clear,
And daisies white, with hearts of yellow down.

And I can sing of sunsets in fair Nebraska's skies,
With golden background flecked by colors rare,
And all the tints of summer and shades of paradise
Veiling the sun and softening its glare.

And little cloudlets flitting, rose tinted pearls they are,
Scattered across a sky of purple blue,
And merging into sunset they fling back one lone star
And softly mingle with the summer's dew.

And I can sing of sunshine, not endless, but as bright
As shines upon the tropic fields and flowers,
Of firefly and moon beam and still cool summer night
Ruled by the god of Beauty's wondrous powers.

And I can sing of south winds that burn with stinging breath
All lives that in their path should chance to stray,
Hot winds that parch and wither, and burn to very death
Vast fields of fruitage lying in their way.

And I can sing of west winds that come at even' tide
To cool the fever of a tired day,
And whisper to the violets of elfin fairy bride,
Or kiss the lilacs blooming 'long the way.

And I can sing of winter, in old Nebraska state,
White winter with her snow banks drifted high
Along the hedge and roadside, to quietly await
Spring suns that come to carry them away.

Ah, I could sing forever of old Nebraska state,
Her noble men, who helped to further on
The work that made her wondrous, and beautiful, and great;
But even then my song would be half sung.

On Christmas Eve

TWO WEE stockings hanging there,
Just below the open stair,
And beside them, fair to see,
Is a wondrous Christmas tree.
In the nursery overhead,
Fast asleep in dainty bed.
Two wee youngsters; and the while
Angels watch — and smile, and smile.

Two small stockings, old and torn.
In a room of gladness shorn,
No bright, sparkling Christmas tree,
Only gnawing poverty.
Two wee youngsters in their bed
Sadly shiver, side by side,
And, as restlessly they sleep,
Angels watch—and weep, and weep.

Christmas

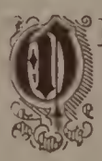
EAR THE ringing and the singing
Of the merry Christmas bells,
As they jingle with a tingle
That all other sound excels.
Hear the echoes sweet rebounding,
As the music clearly sounding,
Sends a thrill through the still night air.

Hear the loud bells ring.
There is music on the wing,
They are swaying, they are playing,
In the high church tower,
And they seem to feel
With each silvery peal,
All the sweetness and completeness
Of their magic power.

Hear the swinging and the ringing
Of the merry Christmas bells,
Oh, the sadness and the gladness
That their harmony foretells.
They are ringing, singing, swinging,
But their echoes still are clinging
To a Christmas of long ago.

When the joy bells rang,
Oh how tunefully they sang,
And the angels up in heaven
Joined the anthems sweet;
For a king was born
On that Christmas morn,
And the Mother Mary watched him
With a joy complete.

To An Easter Lily



H LILY, flower of Easter tide
And sign of purity,
Your waxen petals open wide
And almost speak to me.

You seem to speak of hearts revived,
Of resurrected hope,
You breathe the blessings you've received,
To long lost souls that grope.

Your fragrant incense wafted forth,
A hint of spring-time brings,
And whispers of a joyful earth
When Easter Anthem rings.

Your leaves, like slender finger tips
Point upward to the sky,
And as I press you to my lips
I almost learn the why

Of new-born hope and happiness
Beyond the cross of gloom,
And see the stone rolled far away
From sorrow's darkened tomb.

How can I help but love you then
Sweet symbol of re-birth?
You kindle in the hearts of men
New hope, new love, and truth.

Marbles

OH, THE boys are playing marbles
In the lot across the way,
And I know that winter's over
And spring is here to stay.
I can hear the click of glassies,
Nigger-heads and aggies round,
And it's then I know for certain
That the frost has left the ground.

You may talk of other omens
Of a warm and early spring,
Of Robin red-breast coming,
These signs to chirp and sing;
But no sign of spring is surer,
I care not what you say,
Than the boys aplaying marbles
In the lot across the way.

There's a breath o'spring's own sweetness
In the dust their capers fling,
As with crooked stick or jack-knife
They mark the sacred ring;
Then from bended thumb and finger
The marbles shoot away,
And winter's chill's forgotten
In the rapture of their play.

Ah, those grimy little fingers,
And those dusty trouser knees,
In my mind a sweet tho't lingers
Of their happy, care-free ways;
And when spring's announced in heaven,
I'll be watching every day
For the boys aplaying marbles,
In the lot across the way.

Autumn

AUTUMN divine! Sweet autumn brown and gold,
What artist hand can paint thy colors best?
What brush portray thy beauties manifold,
Or tint the glory of thy favorite crest?

And who may understand the sun's bright ray
That shines reflective on the slanting hill,
Or glints through foliage colorful and gay
Like day stars lent from skies all blue and still?

And who may know the leaves' strange language, as
All brown and gold and green and deeply red,
They rustle through the crisp and wilted grass
To meet the frost nipped flowers drooped and dead?

Autumn divine, with deepest crimson brake,
The mysteries of thy days may ne'er be known;
We only read the promise that you make
Of summers yet to come when you are gone.

We plainly see that in the after glow
Of flower life is beauty most serene,
And in the leaves of autumn learn to know
A beauty rarer than the spring's bright green.

We learn that summer flowers are not more fair—
Although with hope they fill us every one—
Than mellowed autumn leaves so richly rare,
That point to peace, and guerdons fairly won.

And thus we grasp a hope and are content,
Feeling that earth may be more beautiful
In the calm autumn of a life well spent
Than in youth's flaming summer, after all.

A Business Creed

I BELIEVE in the stuff I am handing out,
In the business I'm building, too,
I believe that we get what we want, no doubt,
If we work with a courage true.

I believe in the pleasure my job can give,
In the work that I do today,
I believe that to strive is to truly live
With a hope of the bye and bye.

I believe that to work, and not to weep,
Is the role that the brave should play,
We should keep awake tho' we long to sleep;
If our duty points that way.

I believe from the depths of my very soul,
That somewhere, for everyone,
There's a job that will bring him to the goal
If he bravely pushes on.

I believe that no one is down and out,
Until deep in his heart he feels
That the race is lost, and sinks in doubt
As his own sad fate he seals.

I believe that the road was never trod
That may not be trod again;
I believe in a fellowship with God,
And the brotherhood of man.

November Stars

I HAVE inklings that the twinklings
Of November's stars so bright,
As they glimmer, blink and shimmer
Through the cool autumnal night,
Hint not only of the laughter
Heard in cloud land overhead;
But bespeak a chill hereafter,
When the last fall leaf is dead.

Ah, their winkings and their blinkings
May not all be signs of joy,
Tho' they gleam on and they beam on
From their places in the sky.
Well they know of heavens clouded
By a winter's veil of snow,
Clothed in icy mists, and shrouded
In chill mystery and woe.

There's a sadness with the gladness
Of the chill November stars,
As their bright lights, as their white lights
Penetrate this world of ours;
For while sparkling at earth's glory
From their pedestals on high,
They reflect an untold story
Of the hearts that break and die.

An August Afternoon

OH, THE lazy, hazy hours
Of an August afternoon;
When we breathe the scent of flowers,
Summer flowers in full bloom,
When we nid, and nod and slumber,
'Neath a big tree's spreading shade,
Wishing that the day might linger
And the blossoms never fade.

Oh, the sleepy, creepy hours
Of an August afternoon,
When the insects in the meadow,
And the birds are all in tune,
When the sunshine and the shadow
Seem to merge into a song,
And we nid, and nod and slumber,
As the hours slip along.

Oh, the sorrow of tomorrow,
And the sighs of yesterday
Seem like mists all vague and fleeting
And we linger carelessly.
Oh, the brightness and the lightness
Of the spell around us cast,
Seem to thrill us and to still us,
As we dream of days now past.

Oh, the lazy, hazy hours
Of an August afternoon;
We are filled with Morpheus' powers
As we scent the flowers' bloom,
And we nid, and nod and slumber,
'Neath the trees so green and tall;
Oh, an August afternoon's the
Sweetest afternoon of all.

On the Death of a Young Girl

SHE IS dead, and the voice that once warbled in song
Is hushed now forever;
She has passed from this earth to the white angel throng
Where friends do not sever.
Ah, the lips are so still, that were once like a rose,
The white hands are waxen,
And the pale brow is kissed in its gentle repose
By hair soft and flaxen.

So she sleeps, and her friends sadly weep o'er her bier,
Their hearts torn with sorrow;
She has passed from this life with no dreading or fear
Of death or the 'morrow.
In a grave over there 'neath a young willow tree
They'll place her in sadness;
Where the wild flowers bloom and the birds sing in glee
With nature's own gladness.

Slumber on, thou art one of God's favorite flowers
Plucked out of his garden
Before thou hadst lost the sweet joy of youth's hours,
Or thy heart could harden.
Slumber on, 'tis no wonder thy sweet lips now smile;
The angels have told thee
That earth's sin thy spirit can never defile,
For God's arms now hold thee.

Gifts

A THOUSAND insects in one chorus grand,
A thousand daisies smiling up at me,
A thousand gifts of nature are at hand,
A thousand gems — and all of them are free.

The flowers blooming by the broad highway,
Wild rose, and butter-cup of tawny gold;
Gifts for the lowly and the poor are they,
Gifts that the humblest one may have and hold.

And glimmering stars that bead a sea-blue sky,
A moon that calmly rises from behind
Pale, fluffy clouds that move on noiselessly
To mingle with the brighter tints sublime.

A thousand diamonds glittering in the sun,
Rain drops that sparkle after summer showers,
A thousand evening calls when day is done,
A thousand echoes waked by unseen powers.

And small white butterflies against the green
Of the tall elms whose pointed finger tips
Reach out to touch the summer skies and glean
The kisses thrown from flowers' scented lips.

And fire flies darting out on night patrol,
Each with a search-light sending out its ray
'Mong shrubbery dense, and grasses damp and cool,
Where moon vines grow and crickets chirp and play.

Oh gifts divine, that have been sent to me,
Oh, holy gifts from nature's bosom riven,
In their simplicity I plainly see
God in his strength, and catch a glimpse of heaven.

I Did Not Tell Him

I DID not tell him that the words he spoke
Brought joy unto my soul so weary grown,
I did not tell him that the glad light broke
When his kind look like sunshine o'er me shone,
I did not tell him, tho' he paused e'er passing on;
I did not tell him, and he went his way alone.

I did not tell him that the song he sung
'Woke memories of golden days now past,
I did not tell him when the song was done,
That its sweet echoes in my heart would last,
I did not tell him tho' he gave a pleading look
And went his way alone, like one forsook.

I did not tell him, and his hopes, his fears,
His aims, lay smouldering in a timid soul,
Thirsting for sympathy through weary years,
Tremblingly reaching forth to touch the goal,
Silently pleading for a smile or kindly word;
I did not tell him, and he thought his song unheard.

Oh that my soul had uttered what it thought.
Oh that my lips had opened in kind praise,
Into a desert heart I might have brought
Courage and hope to crown his passing days.
Under a film of doubt lay hidden wondrous might;
I did not tell him, and at last he gave up the fight.

A June Morning

GOLD cicled sun bursting forth in the east,
Low call of birds, from night fears released,
Notes from a chorus of insects that seem
Like strains from some orchestra heard in a dream.
Deep shadows cast on the bright new-born day
By Night, who so recently flitted away.
Pale pastel shades that show dim in the dawning,
Green flecked with rainbow hues—
That's a June morning.

Filmy mists rising out of the ground,
Wonderful skies, that seem to abound
In pearly white billows toss'd up from the sea
To settle and rest in a blue bedded sky.
Trembling petals aquiver with dew,
Softly unfolding, their beauty to show,
Pale pastel shades that show dim in the dawning,
Green flecked with rainbow hues—
That's a June morning.

Perfume of roses with jasamine blending
Waxen white lillies, their sweetness extending
Over the whole of a marvelous scene,
Where nature abounds in a beauty serene.
Breezes so soft that the tiniest flower
Fears not their caresses, nor shrinks at their power.
Pale pastel shades that show dim in the dawning,
Green flecked with rainbow hues—
That's a June morning.

The Old Fiddler

AND SO the old fiddler was buried today;
I watched the slow treading procession go by, .
I heard the deep tones of the requiem slow,
As it sobbed out its melodies, tearful and low.
I listened, and lo, as I heard it again
An echo came back from the chords now and then,
As in beautiful rythm the tones rose and fell
'Till they whispered the airs that he once loved so well.

I see him in fancy again at the dance,
With glad song and laughter his joy to enhance,
While gay lads and lassies as light as on wing
Keep step to the sound of his old violin.
In silence I listen, and hear once again
An echo come back from a beautiful strain,
As in wonderful rythm the tones rise and fall
To the "alamand left and the promenade all."

The dance now has started, the caller begins;
"Four ladies step out to the right o' the ring,"
The old fiddler's music rings clear above all,
"Now four to the center and back to the wall."
His age is forgotten, he's once more a boy,
His foot taps the floor as he fiddles with joy;
And see how his old eyes light up to the call,
To the "alamand left and the promenade all."

Ah yes, he is dead, they have buried him low,
And silent and still are the fiddle and bow.
The swing of the tunes that he played with delight
Will soon be forgotten, their echoes take flight,
And the gay lads and lassies who danced to his songs
Will have met life's dark trials, its mistakes and its wrongs,
But anon in reflection, they'll fondly recall
The "alamand left and the promenade all."

The Old Postman

HE CAME every day, tho' the weather was cold,
Tho' the sun in the sky smote the earth like a flame,
And tho' he was tired and weary and old,
The smile that he gave us was always the same;
With his merry old, cheery old "how do ye do,"
With his "here is a card, or a letter for you."

He came every day, we could always depend
On the faithful old postman, atremble with age.
More welcome his advent than kinsman or friend;
We waited and watched for the gentle old sage,
With his merry old, cheery old "how do ye do,"
With his "here is a card or a letter for you."

He came every day, but he comes not again
With the little brown horse and the gray covered cart,
And we'll watch and we'll wait for his coming, in vain,
With a choke in the throat and a throb in the heart,
And a sigh for his cheery old "how do ye do,"
For his "here is a card, or a letter for you."

He came every day, and I wonder tonight
If he watched for our smiles as we took them from him,
And I wonder if we made his burdens more light,
As his voice became weak and his eyes grew more dim;
While we looked for that cheery old "how do ye do,"
For that "here is a card or a letter for you."

He came every day, yet we'll see him no more,
As he drove up the road at a slow, tired gait,
But we'll see him at night in our dreams, I am sure,
And we'll hear his kind voice as we listen and wait
For his merry old, cheery old "how do ye do,"
For his "here is a card or a letter for you."

The Home-Town Band

I HAVE heard the strains of music
Of a thousand orchestras,
I have listened to great artists of renoun,
But they've bro't me no such thrill—
And they never never will—
As the band that played in our home town.

In the balmy summer evenings
When the baseball nine had won,
Or when county politicians were to speak,
The old home town band would play
With a noisy, rythmic sway,
While the folks paraded up and down the street.

Oh, the rapping and the tapping
Of the little tenor drum!
It delighted, it excited, it elated every one.
We stood breathlessly around,
Fairly breathing in the sound
Of the drum, drum, drum-drum-drum.

There was Archibald Macgregor,
We were mighty proud of him;
He was neat and trim and chipper, you may know.
For a fiddle he was born,
But he'd learned to play a horn,
And 'twas wonderful the way that he could blow.

Little Jim, the trombone player
Was a master of the art,
'Twas acknowledged that his music was correct.
We would hang on every note,
And the sweet strains would promote
Tho'ts elysian to the dullest intellect.

Oh, the rapping and the tapping
Of the little tenor drum!
It delighted, it excited, it elated every one.
We stood breathlessly around,
Fairly breathing in the sound
Of the drum, drum, drum-drum-drum.

Oh, the leader was a marvel,
He would swing the baton high
As his body weaved in motion quick or slow;
Instruments from every nation
He could play with animation—
And 'twas said that he had traveled with a show.

There were others, I remember,
Tom and Will and Dick and Joe;
How the tinsel on their uniforms did shine!
Oh, it sparkled in the sun
Like pure gold—and every one
Of the boys stood straight as soldiers formed in line.

Oh, the rapping and the tapping
Of the little tenor drum!
It delighted, it excited, it elated every one.
We stood breathlessly around,
Fairly breathing in the sound
Of the drum, drum, drum-drum-drum.

Oh, the basses and the brasses
And the little cornets, too,
How in tones of rythmic harmony they rang,
When they played the grand fina'le
It was like a shot, a volley,
And the old board sidewalks rattled with the clang.

Oh, the boys have ceased their playing,
We will hear them never more;
Time has taken all that happiness away,
But it cannot take the dreams
Of the bygone days it seems,
Or the picture painted in our memory.

Oh, the rapping and the tapping
Of the little tenor drum!
It delighted, it excited, it elated every one.
We stood breathlessly around,
Fairly breathing in the sound
Of the drum, drum, drum-drum-drum.

Oh Spring, Thou Fickle Jade

THE darkening clouds that spring's bright glances fade,
Hold out small promise for a dress parade;
Milady's new spring togs—Ah, what do they
But mock the one who longs for bright array?

The new silk sweater, dainty dress and all
Smile sweetly at her from the closet wall;
And there's the pumps, and roll-top stockings, too—
If summer never comes what shall she do?

Each night she prays that morning light may bring
A little warmth, oh, just a breath of spring,
That she may wear, if only for an hour,
The garb to mark her for a summer flower.

But when, like Phoebus' lark, she doth arise,
Behold a sunless world with weeping skies,
Sharp northern winds the wintry chills promote,
And hopelessly she dons her winter coat.

Good Bye, Old Year

OLD YEAR, good bye.
'Twould be of no avail
Tho' I should plead with thee to longer stay;
Like other years, adown the ages trail
You pass into oblivion and are free.

Old year, good bye.
The great old father, Time,
Has cut the silver thread that bound you here,
And now, as bells peal out with silvery chime,
You step aside for this, the glad New Year.

But stay, old year,
The things I meant to do
While yet you lingered here are still undone;
The works I planned, the deeds of kindness, too,
Are not yet finished; I have just begun.

Ah, stay, old year,
Nor bid me yet adieu,
A soul I might have strengethened, but did not,
A withered flower I might have taught to grow,
The prayers I should have whispered I forgot.

Old year, good bye.
Yea, other years may come,
And other works, and other joys I know,
But those good deeds that I have left undone
While you were here, with thee will have to go.
Old year, good bye.

The Meadow-Lark's Song

I HEARD a meadow-lark's silvery trill,
I heard it but yesterday;
The things that it told me a book would fill.
How it warbled and sang to me!

It told me that out by the broad highway
The grasses were springing up,
And I heard in the lilt of its roundelay
A song of the butter cup.

I caught the breath of the lilac sweet
That grows for the honey-bee,
I pictured the clover with bright dew wet,
As the meadow-lark trilled away.

I felt the warmth of a morning wind,
As soft on my cheek 'twas blown,
And the hurry and worry of all mankind
Seemed things I had never known.

Somehow, I felt that the world was new,
Somehow my faith grew strong,
And mine was the courage to dare and do—
I had learned the lark's glad song.

Admonition

BLOOM on, oh lovely flowers,
Send out your perfume rare,
For summer days will soon be past and gone;
Let elfin leaves look upward,
And petals open where
They may luxuriate in a dazzling sun.

Grow on, oh wondrous elm trees,
And spread your branches forth;
A canopy to shade the passers by,
Yea, lend your leafy foliage
To beautify the earth,
For summer days, ah, how they hurry by.

Sing on, oh happy wild bird,
And preen your pinions bright,
And nest and mate in happiness sublime,
Sing loudly in your rapture,
For you must soon take flight;
Must leave that nest and seek a warmer clime.

Sing on, oh fair young mother,
Sing well that lullaby,
While still the baby nestles on your arm;
For soon may come life's winter,
Its chill and misery,
And in your grief you may forget the song.

My Call

OH, HOW may I know my call from God,
What would he have me do?
Oh, how may I tread the paths he trod,
Living his words anew?

To know of a duty left undone—
That is my call from God,
To learn of some poor disheartened one—
That is my call from God.

The cry of a soul in deep distress,
A heart not understood,
The sigh of one lost in waywardness—
That is my call from God.

To know of a duty left undone,
That is my call from God,
To learn of some poor disheartened one—
That is my call from God.

Friendship

FRIENDSHIP, how good and how sacred the word;
What of this old world without it?
Friendship, the soul with emotion is stirred
As we ponder and wonder about it.

Friendship! What magic the thought doth imply;
Chains of affection, gold welded
And jeweled with pearls found in love's perfect sky,
With the gems of sweet charity gilded.

Friendship, how good and how sacred the word;
What of this old world without it?
Friendship, the soul with emotion is stirred
As we ponder and wonder about it.

The Letter From My Friend

A WING'ED messenger most kind,
That letter from my friend I find;
A glint of sunshine's brightest rays,
It lends a color to the days
That bring a message from the pen
Of one whose soul and mine are kin.

A little germ of gladness thrown
Into my life, has thrived and grown
Until its branches far o'er shade
The path that I was wont to tread,
And in my heart has fastened deep
It's tendrils, there a hold to keep.

The sheen, the glitter and the show
Of riches' baubles here below,
Merge into dull and dark abyss
Compared with blessings such as this;
And when the portals, wide unfurled,
Admit me to that heavenly world,
A loneliness do I portend
Without that letter from my friend.

I Can Forgive

I CAN forgive, because in my forgiving
I am brought closer to the mind divine,
I am made strong, with love's sweet spirit striving,
I am made humble with a peace sublime.
I can forgive.

I can forgive, for in my sweet forgiving
Souls long in darkness catch a hope's bright ray,
And find a joy, a blessedness in living,
Knowing that love has opened up the way.
I can forgive.

I can forget, for in my kind forgetting
All that I one time felt as thrusts so cold
Seem as a mist, a dream of woe's begetting
Wafted to me through memory's halls so old.
I can forget.

Oh, the forgetting and the sweet forgiving,
How through my soul the sunshine it can send,
Making my heart-throbs bound with joy of living,
Giving me strength to keep the upper trend.
I can forgive.

The World

THE WORLD knows but little of failures.
And certainly cares a lot less.
Poor efforts to win so seldom are seen:
The world watches only success.

The world knows but little of failures,
Tho' efforts be crowned with distress,
The world likes to sup from the victor's cup:
The world watches only success.

So keep to yourself your excuses,
Nor tell all your woes to the throng:
Tho' few seem to hear a tale of despair,
The whole world will list' to a song.

My Song

IF I CAN make you laugh a little longer
Than you are wont to laugh, my tired friend,
If I can make your courage any stronger,
For some stray shaft that I may chance to send:
If I can make a smile where once was sadness,
Or bring the sunshine where a cloud has hung:
More glorious than yours will be my gladness,
For I'll know that in vain I have not sung.

If I can make you pause awhile and listen
To some poor message that I bring to you—
Altho' my words may cause your eyes to glisten,
And for a time bring heartaches, friend, to you—
If what I say can 'wake a hope supernal,
Or fan to life a flame of hope long dead,
The song I sing will be a song eternal,
And for the effort I'll be doubly paid.

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